

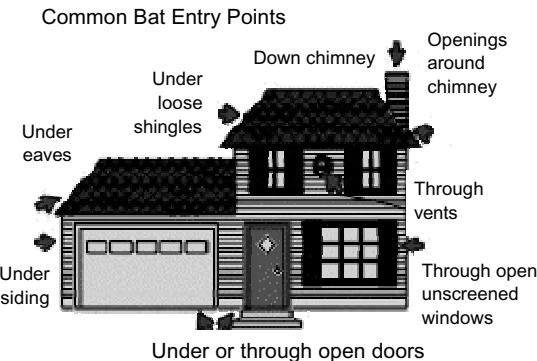
## Things to remember when "bat-proofing"

Carefully inspect your home for holes. Any openings larger than a quarter inch by a half inch should be filled in with caulk. This includes electrical and plumbing holes.

Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics. Make sure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

Watch for where the bats exit at dusk and stop them by loosely hanging a piece of clear plastic or bird netting over these areas. Bats can crawl out and leave, but cannot re-enter. After all of the bats are out of the opening, then permanently close the holes.

- Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate, so these are the best times to "bat-proof" your home.
- During summer, many young bats are unable to fly. If you get rid of the adult bats during this time, the young may be trapped inside and die or make their way into your home. For this reason, avoid exclusion from May through August.



## Erie County Department of Health Environmental Health District Field Offices

### Buffalo

462 Grider St.

ECMC Campus

Bldg. BB

Buffalo, NY 14215

961-6800

Buffalo, Lackawanna, Grand Island,

### Hamburg

17 Long Ave.

Hamburg, NY 14075

649-4225

Angola, Aurora, Blasdell, Boston, Brant,  
Chaffee, Colden, Collins, Concord, East Aurora,  
Eden, Evans, Farnham, Gowanda, Hamburg,  
Holland, North Collins, Orchard Park, Sardinia,  
Springville, Wales

### Lancaster

85 Manitou

Depew, NY 14043

683-6487

Akron, Alden, Amherst, Cheektowaga, Cla-  
rence, Depew, Elma, Lancaster, Marilla, New-  
stead, Sloan, West Seneca, Williamsville

If you or your pets come in contact with a bat after regular business hours, please call **898-4225**.

ECDOH staff will determine if the bat will be picked up for testing, and if it will be picked up, then this will occur during regular business hours.

HE-240 (04/06)



## What you need to know about Bats and Rabies

A public health guide from the  
Erie County  
Department of Health

Joel A. Giambra  
County Executive

Anthony J. Billittier IV, M.D.  
Commissioner of Health

**Did you know that ...** Bats are not blind. They are neither rodents nor birds. They will not suck your blood. Bats play key roles in ecosystems around the globe, from rain forests to deserts, especially by eating insects, including agricultural pests. The best protection we can offer these unique mammals is to learn more about their habits and recognize the value of living safely with them. In addition, studies of bats have contributed to medical advances including the development of navigational aids for the blind. Unfortunately, many local populations of bats have been destroyed and many species are now endangered.

## Why should I learn about bats and rabies?

Most of the recent human rabies cases in the United States have been caused by the rabies virus from bats. Knowing the facts about bats and rabies can help people protect themselves, their families, and their pets.

## What is rabies and how do people get it?

Rabies is a viral disease that infects the brain of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies (a rabid animal). Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and can give it to people. It is also possible, but quite rare, that people may get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound.

Because rabies is a deadly disease, the goal of public health is, first, to prevent human contact with rabies by education and, second, to prevent the disease by treatment if contact occurs. Tens of thousands of people are successfully treated each year after being bitten by an animal that may have rabies. A few people die of rabies each year in the United States, usually because they do not know the risks of being bitten by a wild animal and do not get medical care.

For more about endangered bats go to [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

For Rabies information go to [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies)

## What should I do if I come in contact with a bat?

If you are bitten by a bat, or if infectious material (such as saliva) from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a cut, wash the area with soap and water and call your doctor or the Erie County Health Department. **Whenever possible, the bat should be captured and sent to a laboratory for rabies testing.** See: *How can I safely capture a bat in my home?*

**Bats have small teeth that may leave marks that are not easy to see. Because of this, you should get medical advice even if you do not see bite marks when you wake up and find a bat in your room, or if you see a bat in the room of a child or near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person. Whenever possible, the bat should be caught and tested for rabies.**

## What should I do if my pet comes in contact with a bat?

If you think your pet or domestic animal has been bitten by a bat, contact a veterinarian or your health department immediately for help and to have the bat tested for rabies. Remember to keep vaccinations up to date for cats, dogs, and other animals.

## How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

If professional help is not available, capture the bat safely as described below:

- What you will need: leather work gloves (put them on), small box or coffee can, piece of cardboard, and tape.
- When the bat lands, move toward it slowly. While wearing the gloves, put the box or coffee can over it. Then, slide the cardboard under the container



to trap the bat inside. Tape the cardboard to the container, and punch small holes in the cardboard, allowing the bat to breathe. Contact your health department to make arrangements for rabies testing.

- If you see a bat in your home and you are sure no human or pet came in contact with it, then keep the bat in the room by closing all doors and windows leading out of the room except those to the outside. The bat will probably leave soon. If not, it can be caught, as described, and released outdoors away from people and pets.

## How can rabies be prevented?

- Teach children never to handle wild animals and animals that they do not know. **"Love your own, leave other animals alone"** is a good rule for children to follow.
- Wash any cut or bite from an animal with soap and water and seek medical help right away.
- Stop bats from entering your homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Be a responsible pet owner:
  - Keep vaccinations current for all dogs, cats, and ferrets
  - Keep your cats and ferrets inside and always watch your dogs when outside.
  - Call animal control to remove stray animals from your neighborhood.
  - Have your pets spayed or neutered.